

"snitch" system on the outside, as Russia had it under the Czar.

Perhaps I can better illustrate by an incident which came within my observation. A new official had taken charge. He had had no experience whatever with prisoners, and was full of the beautiful theory that you could handle all of them on an "honor" system, just as you would in college. His first act was to assemble the men in the dining room and tell them that he hated a "snitch" above all things and that the first man who attempted to tell him anything about another prisoner "would be kicked down the stairs" from his office. About two weeks later a prisoner slid up to him in the yard and out of the corner of his month conveyed information that one of his fellows had secreted some guns and dynamite in the yard and intended to blow up the place that night and endeavor to effect a wholesale escape. Did he refuse to listen? Did he call him a "contemptible 'snitch'"? Did he "kick him down the stairs"? Did he? He did not. He did just what you or I or any one else would do. He accepted the information gratefully and took immediate steps to checkmate the plot. An hour later he had in his office a nice little collection which included ten revolvers, 200 rounds of ammunition, a dozen dynamite sticks and some percussion caps and fuses. Another thing which he had was firm belief in the use of "snitches."

Cutting Through Walls With a Tablespoon

Very often it appears easier to the prisoners to cut through the walls than to attempt to sever the bars. All kinds of tools have been used for this purpose, and it is not at all unusual for a prisoner to cut through a wall several feet thick with an ordinary tablespoon, a kitchen knife or half a pair of scissors. As this work is slow it is necessary to use every precaution to keep hidden the opening which is being made. The usual method is to stuff back into the opening when work is suspended all the materials which have been dug out and again removing them when an opportunity presents itself. But sometimes the material taken out does not have the proper consistency to hold it into place when put back. One prisoner solved this difficulty by stuffing wet bread into the opening which had been made and rubbing powdered cement and dirt over it to give it the same color as the other portions of the wall.

No space seems too small for a prisoner to crawl through. Years ago jails were constructed with no openings in the walls, except a narrow slit about eight or ten inches wide in the back of each cell, about eight feet from the ground. It was so small that the possibility of ever getting through it was not even considered. One of the jails in Pennsylvania—my recollection is that it is the jail at Sunbury—is so constructed. They had not had an escape through these windows in over fifty years. However, one prisoner did manage to get through. To make himself more slender than he was by nature he dosed himself with purgatives for an extended period. He then greased his body with lard or butter stolen from the kitchen where he worked and after several hours of effort succeeded in squirming through this small opening, a gladder and greasier man.

Once in a while even sewers are used by prisoners to assist them to freedom. The Maryland prison, at Baltimore, had an escape of this kind some time ago. The prisoner who made the escape had a friend who had just been released. Every day after the friend left the prisoner might be seen casting a sidelong glance at a small grating in the corner of the prison yard. A day went by. Then two. Then three. Would it never happen? Then one day he saw a small scrap of red rag lodged against the grating, apparently washed there by the rain. But that night while the men were lined up in the yard ready to march in to supper Murphy (which isn't his name) managed to lose himself for a few minutes. Then men went in to supper. Murphy lifted the grating, almost large enough to accommodate a man, squeezed himself in and replaced it after him.

Freedom's Faint Light At a Sewer's End

Then began a journey the like of which few men would dare attempt. The drain pipe led into a much larger one, about four feet in diameter, but in which a man going through could not stand erect. It swarmed with enormous rats, was full of sewer gas and filled generally with filth. For half a mile in complete darkness this prisoner crawled and waded, sometimes in water up to his waist, engaging every foot of the way in a constant battle with rats. Every yard seemed harder to pass than the one before. He was just about to give up the struggle when he saw a sickly yellow gleam of light. A last desperate effort brought him to the mouth of the sewer, and here, hidden alongside of it, as his friend had promised, lay a complete outfit of civilian clothing. The change was hurriedly made and Murphy was gone, never to return.

And now meet the real hero of the occasion, Mr. Cronin, ex-prisoner, who for no other reason than pure friendship for Murphy, had entered the sewer at its mouth, fought his way up against the current step by step to the grating, where he tied the little piece of red rag as a signal that all was in readiness. Greater love than this hath no man.

This same trick was tried in another prison

BATTLES WITH JAIL BREAKERS



For half a mile, in complete darkness, this prisoner crawled and waded, engaging every foot of the way in a constant battle with rats

"kidded 'em along." So that was all of that.

I investigated the escape of Robert Fay from the Federal prison at Atlanta. Fay, it will be remembered, is a German who was convicted during the war of placing bombs on American ships. He got away with ease. With another prisoner named Knobloch, his cellmate, he forged a pass in the name of Mr. Bixby, the chief engineer, which permitted them to go out into the yard of the institution. They secured a ladder, some rags and some coils of wire and presented their pass to the guard, stating that they had been sent to clean and fix electric lights in the yard. They spent about fifteen or twenty minutes pretending to fix lights. Then they presented the pass to one of the tower guards, stating that they had been sent to fix the lights on the grounds of the warden's residence, which was further away. This they did so coolly and with such an air of authority that the guard did not telephone into the deputy's office to verify the pass, as he was supposed to do, but permitted them to go out. The pair then graciously

spent another fifteen or twenty minutes pretending to fix lights here and there, their labors taking them further and further away from the prison, until, like the Arabs, they silently stole away.

Like many other escapes, this one illustrates that, no matter how secure bars and bolts may be, it is in the last analysis the human element which must ever be recognized. Crooks, like love, laugh at locksmiths.

All prison men said of McGuire that he had "done his bit in every state in the country." This may not have been strictly true, but he had nevertheless a criminal record that indicated a very active life for a man of his years. He was known far and wide as a "bad hombre," consequently when he was taken temporarily from prison across the country to Portland, Ore., to testify in a case in which he was an important witness, the warden called in Young and Wickens, the guards who were to accompany him on the long journey, and impressed upon them the need of caution to see that McGuire did not get away. He told

them that McGuire had been boasting that they would never get him to Portland and that there was no doubt he would attempt to escape on the way.

Young had been a guard for more than twenty years, and he informed the warden that he knew prisons and prisoners inside and out, and that there wasn't any prisoner who could escape from him. We find the three of them two days later on the North Coast Limited going through Idaho. The train had just passed Sand Point when McGuire asked to go to the lavatory. Young accompanied him and held his foot in the door. McGuire suddenly stamped on his foot and as he involuntarily withdrew it slammed and locked the door. Young rushed around to the platform, opened the vestibule door and looked out. This did not take a minute. The window to the lavatory was open, but McGuire had disappeared as though the earth had swallowed him. Young sprang for the emergency bell rope and stopped the train with a jerk that lifted the passengers out of their seats and threw the food off the table in the dining car. As the train came to a stop Young and Wickens alighted and ran back along the track. There had been a light snow and they figured it would be easy to see where McGuire had alighted and trace him. But there was not the slightest sign of a footstep in the snow, so there was nothing to do but again board the train and go on to Portland. A puzzling case, as Dr. Watson would say? Not at all. McGuire had figured that his recapture would be easy if he alighted, so he didn't alight. He merely grabbed a small rod above the lavatory window on the outside of the train and drew himself up to the roof, where he threw himself flat on his stomach and in this manner rode into Portland, alighting a mile or two from the station when the train slowed down. Mile after mile he had ridden on the roof, not three yards from his erstwhile custodians.

Hardened as McGuire was in some respects, he showed that he "had a heart" by actually writing a letter to the warden about a week later begging him not to discipline either of these guards as they had both been very vigilant and had used every precaution in guarding him. He assured the warden that he would have escaped from any other guard just as easily and that both Young and Wickens had simply been "out of luck" in being chosen for the trip.

Dyed His White Stripes Color of the Dark

An ingenious escape was made several years ago by a prisoner confined in an institution on the Pacific Coast. At that time the uniform of stripes was being used. Incidentally, it may be stated that the use of stripes has caused an endless amount of criticism, and they have now been abolished in practically all the larger institutions of the country. It has been contended, and justly so, that they caused the prisoner needless humiliation. But the basic idea of their use was to render his recapture easy if he escaped. In this they failed miserably. Prisoners intending to escape found many ingenious ways of securing civilian clothing. The prisoner in the case I have mentioned could not obtain civilian clothing, so he invented another way out. He contrived to get some dye of the same shade as the dark stripes with which he dyed the white ones. He then stole an overcoat from one of the guards,

and this, when the coat was tightly buttoned, made him look like any other civilian, after which escape was easy. He was an "outside trusty" and simply walked away.

It is not only against efforts to smuggle firearms that the prison official must be constantly on the alert, but also against efforts to get in other articles which will assist in effecting escapes. A prisoner receives a magazine from friends on the outside. The mail clerk carefully inspects it, but nothing out of the way is found. He tries to bend it. A sharp snap results. Further search reveals that the entire magazine has been taken apart, a small file placed between the leaves and beyond the stitches. It is then completely rebound. Naturally, when it is paged it will reveal the leaves only as far as the stitches.

Transferred a Small Saw During a Kiss

On visiting days prisoners are usually allowed to receive small presents from friends and relatives. At such times a guard is always present, but even the most sophisticated are often fooled. Small saws are dropped down a prisoner's blouse by his wife while greeting him with an affectionate hug, and even transferred from her mouth to his while kissing. Apples, oranges and bananas are believed as cleverly as almost to defy detection, and many other articles to be used in escape passed in them. They have been found in the soles of slippers, the hems of handkerchiefs, in toothpaste, combs, brushes and dozens of other articles. Once he has them in his possession the prisoner conceals them in the arm pit or holds them to the sole of the foot with adhesive tape or any other place about his body where it cannot be detected while he is bathing, at which time, of course, a guard is present. There is constant danger of detection in concealing such articles in his cell, as the cells in every well administered institution are searched ("fanned" or "frisked" as the prisoners call it) at frequent and unexpected intervals.

Equally close watch must be kept on prisoners' mail to prevent friends on the outside from ranging to secrete guns or other contraband articles around the grounds or farm of the institution. All sorts of tricks are tried to get secret messages in to prisoners by friends desirous of helping them. It is a daily occurrence in any large prison to detect ciphers, invisible writing which is brought out by water or heat, and similar attempts to communicate secretly. Messages are written on small pieces of paper which are pasted under the stamp on the envelope.

For cool daring the escape of David Bender from the Maryland "pen" vies with any I know. Because he was considered one of the most desperate prisoners in the institution he had been making repeated efforts to escape for a year or two, every officer in the institution was instructed to keep the closest watch on him and to take no chances whatever. Any attempt to escape was rendered unusually difficult for him. One day he is quietly working in the shop, watched vigilantly by the shop guard. Like a meteor he suddenly dashes out with the guard in hot pursuit. He flies down the steps, rushes to the wall, grabs a ladder which despite their precautions he has managed to obtain and secrete for the purpose and in full view of an armed tower guard throws it over the wall, climbs up, flings the ladder over the other side and climbs down. The armed guard, taken apparently by surprise, in which no doubt Bender counted, still makes no attempt to shoot him. Bender swiftly jumps aboard a passing motor truck, which the scared driver speeds up at his request, throws his uniform hat and coat into the street to avoid quick detection and passes out of sight, while the shop guard is still clamoring for help and the wall guard, with his gun stands motionless like a painted soldier "against a painted sky."

Inspired by this situation, one of the prisoners wrote the following:

Speak kindly to the little "screw"
Who totes the little gun.
He doesn't know just what to do.
He thinks it's all in fun.

To shoot a "con" would spoil his job.
He doesn't think he's "lougher."
The gun with which he likes to play
Is one that's filled with water.

He doesn't want to be thought rough
By "gray cat," "rat" or "fucker."
His gun, it seems, is a bluff.
Hence, Bender is a "breaker."

In another prison in the Middle West the warden was questioning an escaped prisoner who had just been recaptured. After the bird had flown two of the bars of his cell were found to have been severed. Naturally, the warden was curious to know how it had been done, and was particularly anxious to obtain the saw. After a period of sullen silence the convict master mechanic finally declared that he had sawed through the bars of his cell with a piece of yarn taken from his sock, at which the warden became pleasantly sarcastic.

"Sure," he said, "and when that wore out you used a cream puff."

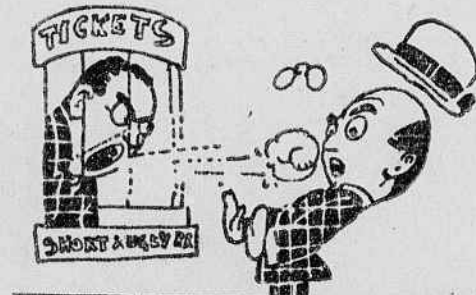
The Advantage of Working In the Carpenter Shop

But the prisoner stuck to his story so insistently that the warden, who was somewhat of a sport, made an agreement with him that he would not take away any of his "copper" for attempting to escape if he would sever a bar in the way he claimed he had. The prisoner went back to the carpenter shop in which he worked, took several pieces of yarn from his sock, dipped them in glue, rolled them through emery powder, allowed the entire mass to dry and hardened and sawed through a cell bar in twenty-one hours of actual working time.

Picture the difficulties under which he had originally worked; the perseverance, determination and vigilance that was demanded of him. Each night he would devote a few minutes at a time to sawing, at the same time keeping a hand mirror projecting a few inches out of his cell. This is an old prison trick and enables a prisoner to tell when the "screw" is coming up the runway on which the cell face. The guards wear "sneaks," so their approach cannot be detected. When he saw the guard coming he would discontinue sawing, leap into bed and feign sleep, again resuming his work after the guard had passed. He was not at all discouraged at being recaptured, but calmly announced that he would "git another chance."

PERSONALLY CONDUCTORED TRAVEL

By JAMES J. MONTAGUE Illustrations by MERLE JOHNSON



"If I wasn't that way how would folks know I was an agent?"

EVEN if you are a traveling man and call the Pullman porter "George," you never get away with anything in the estimation of the crew of a passenger train. In one of those schools where bright young men are trained to wear brass buttons and slam doors so they give out reports like pistol shots there must be a chair of passenger despising. Anyway, it is an art that all trainmen acquire early in their careers and spend the rest of their lives mastering.

Now and then when they find themselves lapsing into occasional periods of semi-politeness they drop off the train and take a few lessons from the station agents.

After a little tutelage at the ticket windows they come back in shape to make the freshest passenger who ever referred to the Overland Limited as No. 17 shrink into his shell and show proper respect for the man in uniform.

It was in a play by the late Charles H. Hoyt that a station agent peers through his little window and snarls at everybody who tries to purchase his pasteboard wares.

By and by a stranger who has been observing him steps up and says: "What makes you so consarned mean and nasty to everybody, anyhow?"

The station agent looks at him in astonishment for a second and replies:

"Why, if I wasn't that way, how in tunket would folks know I was the station agent?"

I have been a passenger bound for various parts of the United States and Canada, off and

on, and at present I am the ameba of passengers, which is a commuter. (The ameba is, as of course you know, the lowest form of animal life.)

In restaurants and on thoroughfares infested by traffic cops I have learned to assert myself. I can almost manage an air of equality with a head waiter nowadays, and have often argued about the speed law with a motorcycle policeman.

But on a train I know my place. I would no more dare ask a conductor how late the train is than I would ask General Pershing to lend me his Sam Browne belt to strop my razor on.

Now, it isn't that conductors throw you off trains, or cuff you over the head with their punches, or even—excepting on rare occasions—use rough language to you that makes you

so thoroughly cowed when in their presence.

It's the way they look at you and the way they mumble about you as they walk down the aisle after you have asked them a question.

Then suspicion always sits enthroned on their countenances, and if by chance your ticket has slipped from the crack beneath the ornamental plush strip on the top of the seat where you tucked it, and fallen on the floor, you know, as you frantically paw around to find it, that they think you haven't any ticket and are trying to steal a ride.

On occasions such as these they exhibit the sort of an impatience that a corner policeman exhibits when he has told an owner-chauffeur to come ahead and the owner-chauffeur can't get his car started.

It is not a pleasant impatience. There is something about it that convinces you that



I would no more dare ask a conductor how late the train is than I would ask General Pershing to lend me his Sam Browne belt to strop my razor on



There is no dodging them. They have certain things to say to you

drastic action is about to be taken, and that you will be seized by the scruff of the neck and dropped off the platform.

If you could ignore conductors, as you can certain other classes of officials, such as Presidents and Governors, it would be different. But you can't. They insist on themselves.

There is no dodging them. They have certain things to say to you, such as: "Keep your feet off the seat!" and "Don't you know better than to stand on the platform!" that you must listen to.

Furthermore, they will not let you alone.

On the suburban train which I employ daily I often seek slumber. In order that I may enjoy it to the utmost limit of the time I am on the train I frequently tuck my commutation ticket under the rail, where it can be easily seen by the conductor—even partially removing the coupon so he can detach it without troubling me.

Does he do it? Not he. He detaches it, all right.

But he also takes out the ticket along with it, and prods me in the chest with it till I waken, saying: "Here's your ticket. Don't you want it?" till I am thoroughly awakened.

He wouldn't let me sleep for any money, though why I have never found out.

One this same railroad there used to be notices posted up in all the cars that courtesy was the rule of the road and all the employees observed it.

They took them down a couple of years ago. People laughed at them so much that the railroad was afraid it would have to pay the government an amusement tax on them.

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